Preschool and Pre-K Lottery FAQ
School Year 2012 2013

DCPS is proud to offer over 6,000 seats for three- and four-year-old children across 86 schools. However, students are not required to attend preschool (3) or pre-k (4), and some schools are unable to accommodate all applicants. Therefore, preschool and pre-k seats are allocated using a lottery system with any seats remaining after the lottery allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. In-boundary applicants who do not receive a preschool or pre-k seat will still have the right to attend kindergarten at their in-boundary school beginning at age five.

Fast Facts:
- The Preschool and Pre-k Lottery application period for the 2012-2013 school year **begins on January 30 and ends on February 27.**** Please check dcps.dc.gov one week prior to the opening of the lottery for specific opening and closing times.
- Applicants may each apply to up to six school programs, selecting any combination of in-boundary and/or out-of-boundary schools.
- Preschool applicants must turn three years old by September 30, 2012. Pre-k applicants must turn four years old by September 30, 2012.
- The lottery application must be completed online; no paper applications will be accepted.
- Results will be posted online on March 2 and mailed home by March 9.
- Applicants who receive a seat in the lottery must accept the offer by April 2 by returning the "Letter of Intent to Accept Lottery Seat" to the accepting school. Applicants must also submit a complete enrollment packet by May 2 (including DC residency verification) in order to secure the seat. You must be prepared to prove in-boundary and sibling preferences at this time.

1. If I apply early in the application period, will I have a better chance of being accepted?
No. As long as you apply between January 30 and February 27, there is no advantage to applying early.

2. If my child lives in-boundary for the school to which I'm applying, has a sibling at the school, or lives close to the school, will I have a better chance of being accepted?
Yes. The DC Municipal Regulations allow for a preference in the lottery for a school if your child lives in-boundary for the school, your child has a sibling at the school, or your child lives within reasonable walking distance* of the school. You must be prepared to prove in-boundary residency when registering at a school if admitted with in-boundary preference. (To find your in-boundary school, please visit dcatlas.dcgis.dc.gov/schools. If admitted with a "sibling preference," you must be prepared to prove that your children are siblings when registering at a school.

3. How does the lottery work?
- After the application period ends on February 27, each applicant will be assigned a random number for each school he/she applied to.
- The applicants for each grade at each school will then be sorted in order of random number.
- Applicants will be placed into available seats in their particular grade at each school based on their preference order and their random number order. The following is the order of preferences for the Preschool and Pre-k Lottery:
1. Students who live in-boundary with a sibling at the school are placed first, in random number order.
2. Students who live in-boundary without a sibling at the school are placed next, in random number order.
3. Students who live out-of-boundary with a sibling at the school are placed next, in random number order.
4. Students who attend a closing school at the time of the lottery are placed next, in random number order.
5. Students who live within reasonable walking distance* of the school without a sibling at the school are placed next, in random number order.
6. Any remaining seats will go to students who have no in-boundary, sibling, closing school, or proximity preferences, in random number order.

Exceptions: For dual-language programs, preferences #2 and #3 above are reversed in order to support the programs' language acquisition goals. As a citywide school, the Capitol Hill Montessori School at Logan does not grant in-boundary preference.

- Applicants who are placed into more than one preschool or pre-k program will be given a seat at the school they ranked highest and moved to the waitlist for all other schools on their application.
- Waitlists will be created after all seats in a particular grade at a school are filled, so that students who are not admitted will appear on the waitlist in the preference order described above.

4. Does the order in which I rank my choices affect my lottery results?
Yes. If, during the lottery, a student is placed into more than one school, he/she will be given a seat at the highest ranked school and moved to the waitlist for all other schools on his/her application.

5. Can my child be accepted to more than one school? If we get into a school, what happens to our application for the other school(s)?
In order to maximize the number of applicants who receive a seat at a school to which they've applied, students will not be admitted into more than one school in the Preschool/Pre-k Lottery. However, all applicants will be placed on a waitlist at each school to which they are not admitted during the lottery.

6. How will I know if any preschool/pre-k seats are available at a particular school?
When you select the school and the grade to which you are applying, the application will indicate the number of seats the school anticipates being able to offer at the particular grade during the 2012-2013 school year.

7. I'm submitting Preschool/Pre-k Lottery and/or Out-of-Boundary Lottery applications for more than one child, and I'd like them to be admitted to the same school. Is this possible?
Each child's application is treated independently in the Preschool/Pre-k and Out-of-Boundary Lotteries; therefore, if one sibling is admitted to a particular school, there is no guarantee that the other will be able to attend the same school. However, DCPS seeks to accommodate families by elevating children to the top of the waitlist for their grade at a school if their sibling was admitted to that school through the lottery.

8. Why are in-boundary applicants without siblings at the school given higher preference than out-of-boundary applicants with siblings at the school?
DCPS seeks to create consistent pathways for students throughout their school years. Thus, all out-of-boundary students who are admitted to a school receive the right to continue attending that school through all its available grades, as well as to attend the school's "destination school" in the feeder pattern. In order to minimize potential overcrowding, preschool and pre-k students who have a right to attend their in-boundary school beginning in kindergarten are given higher preference in the preschool and pre-k Lottery for that school. The only exceptions to this are Oyster-Adams and Tyler Spanish Immersion, in order to support the programs' language acquisition goals.

9. I want to place my two-year-old in preschool / I want to place my three-year-old in pre-k. Is this allowed?
No. DC Municipal Regulations state that students applying for preschool must turn three by September 30, 2012, and students applying for pre-kindergarten must turn four by September 30, 2012.

10. Where can I learn more about the school(s) I'm interested in applying to?
Visit profiles.dcps.dc.gov for more information about DCPS schools, including information about Open Houses and continuing updates on the Preschool and Pre-k Lottery process and policies.

11. If my child has an IEP can I apply through the lottery?
Yes, if you have questions regarding your child's specific program, please contact 202-442-5400.

12. How do I complete an application if I don't have internet access?
If you don't have internet access, there are several ways that you can complete the application.
- Visit your local library for free internet use
- Stop by your neighborhood DCPS school. The front office staff can help you complete an application on a school computer.
- Call our Critical Response Line at 202-478-5738. The Critical Response Team will gladly work with you over the phone to submit an application.